

Access or Roads

Issue Related to this Resource

There is a concern that temporary road construction would create an increase in erosion causing sedimentation and would allow additional access for illegal ATV use in the project area. There is a concern that non-native invasive plants will expand their range through temporary road construction, road maintenance and use. There is also a concern that the Collier Hollow Road is causing sedimentation to Collier Hollow Creek and should be considered for decommissioning.

Scope of the Analysis

The spatial bounds of the analysis of effects are limited to National Forest System lands within compartments 2075-2079. The temporal bounds include past harvest activities that affect the current vegetation condition in the project area and any foreseeable vegetative manipulation within the next 10 years.

Existing Situation

The majority of the project area is accessed from the northeast using Forest Service Road (FSR) 641 (Wallen Ridge Road) from Federal Route 23. The Wallen Ridge Road bisects the project area. Gated Forest Service roads 2760 and 2763 access sections of the project area from State Route 611. All FSRs, with the exception of FSR 641 and the Baxley Road, are gated and closed to public vehicle traffic yearlong. FSR 641 is seasonally open and Baxley Road is open year-round.

Table 1. Existing Forest System Roads within the Project Area

Road Name	Road Number	Total Road Length in Project Area (Miles)	Operational Maintenance Level	Traffic Service Level ¹	Public Motorized Use Status
Wallen Ridge	641	9.60	3	O	Seasonal
Lovelady	2760	2.06	2	A	Closed
Upper Lovelady	2763	1.07	2	A	Closed
Lovelady Gap	2764	0.51	2	A	Closed
Lovelady Gap Spur	2764A	2.03	2	A	Closed
Collier Hollow	2780	0.38	2	A	Closed
Hood Hollow	2790	0.69	2	A	Closed
Baxley Road	2791	0.31	3	O	Open

¹ O – open to motorized traffic, A- closed to public motorized traffic, administrative use only.

Road Name	Road Number	Total Road Length in Project Area (Miles)	Operational Maintenance Level	Traffic Service Level ¹	Public Motorized Use Status
Laurel Lane	2792	0.69	2	A	Closed
Shipley Hollow	2793	0.81	2	A	Closed
Cabin Road	2794	0.50	2	A	Closed

Operational Maintenance Level 1 roads are closed to all vehicle traffic. Operational Maintenance Level 2 roads are maintained for high clearance vehicles; Level 3 roads are suitable for passenger car travel. Traffic Service Level describes a road's design for speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom to maneuver, safety, driver comfort and convenience.

Forest Service roads that are open to public use are counted toward the calculation of open road density. In addition, the Forest Plan states that "roads forming the boundary of a contiguous management prescription block contribute half of their length to open road density calculations" (JNFLRMP pp. 2-11). The Forest Plan Standard (JNFLRMP Standard 8E1-OBJ4) for the Ruffed Grouse Management Prescription (8E1) is to maintain an open road density at or below 1.5 miles per square mile. The open road density for the 8E1 prescription is calculated from the formula: (Boundary Miles * 0.5 + Open Road miles within the prescription) divided by square miles of the contiguous prescription area. For this project the calculation would be: ((6.87 miles*0.5)+2.23 miles)/5.56 sq. miles = 1.02 miles per square mile. This number is well within the standard.

System roads that would be utilized during commercial vegetation management activities are in fair condition, generally at acceptable grades. These roads would receive maintenance under action alternative. Some turn widening is also anticipated. Approximately 1.3 miles of temporary road construction is needed to access timber locations.

An administrative correction of the FSR database will add 2.31 miles of existing road. These four roads (Baxley Road, Laurel Lane, Shipley Hollow, and Cabin Road; Table 1) were identified within the project area and will be assigned FSR road numbers. Baxley Road is an Operational Maintenance Level 3 road and is open for public travel; the others are Level 2 and are open for administrative use only.

A site-specific road analysis was completed for this project to inform any potential travel management decisions. It is in the project file.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Proposed Action

The harvest activities proposed under this alternative would involve FSR 641, FSR 2764 and FSR 2764A. These roads will require road maintenance that includes brushing, ditch pulling, blading, culvert replacement, turn-widening, and gravel placement. No new system roads will be created and there is no

net gain in road footage, therefore the current open road density would not change and will remain well within the Forest Plan objective to maintain an open road density at or below 1.5 square miles per mile.

Impacts to soil, aquatic, hydrology/watershed, and recreation resources from the road projects are addressed in each of those respective sections in this chapter. No substantial impacts are anticipated in any resource area. There are 12.14 miles of system road maintenance proposed in this alternative.

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, no roads would be maintained by management activities and no new road construction would occur. Road conditions of existing roads would slightly deteriorate due to lack of maintenance, although this effect over the span of this analysis would be minor as roads in this area are mostly stable.

Cumulative Effects

There would be no change in the open road density in any alternative. As stated in all the resource sections that dealt with the road projects presented here, no substantial impacts are anticipated in any resource area because of the temporary road construction proposed in any alternative. No additional timber management activities are planned to occur in the next 10 years.